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RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHCL #0235/01 0611509
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 021509Z MAR 06
FM AMCONSUL CASABLANCA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6321
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
INFO RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 7471
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 2782
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 1906
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0460
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0196
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0934
RUEHNK/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 2168
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0595
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

UNCLAS CASABLANCA 000235

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KTEX](#) [MO](#)

SUBJECT: NUMBER OF STRIKES UP BUT DAYS LOST WAY DOWN

REFS: (A) 05 CASABLANCA 0082

(B) 05 CASABLANCA 0034

(C) 03 CASABLANCA 0592

¶1. This cable is sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶2. (U) Summary: The Government of Morocco reported recently that the number of strikes in Morocco's private sector rose by 10 percent in 2005, compared to ¶2004. In contrast, however, the number of work-days lost to strikes fell to a low not seen since before the enactment of the new Labor Code. In addition, the GOM claims that labor inspectors have had a strong hand in averting numerous work stoppages and settling worker claims in the informal process. End Summary.

Strike Styles Change

¶3. (U) According to statistics from Morocco's Directorate of Labor, the number of strikes in the private sector rose 10 percent to 154 in 2005, compared to 140 in 2004, 146 in 2003, and 237 in 2002. The increase is surprising considering the downward trend seen since the implementation of the new Labor Code. Even more surprising are related statistics. In 2005 the number of days lost to strikes dropped a significant 27.5 percent to 72,745 compared to the previous year's 100,301. The number of workers participating in strikes, however, increased by a

whopping 66.6 percent.

Labor Inspectors Making a Difference

¶4. (U) Morocco's approximately 300 labor inspectors are struggling under the new, more stringent, Labor Code, however, they appear to be making a difference. Unfortunately, according to the inspectors themselves they feel that they are stretched too thin to accomplish all that is required of them under the new code with the limited number of inspectors available. They appear to be somewhat successful, nevertheless, at assisting in mediating settlements of individual claims. The inspectors maintain that, due to their intercession, 680 Moroccan firms were able to avoid 832 threatened actions such as work stoppages, slowdowns, and strikes. In addition, through intervention, the inspectors claim to have mediated disputes between individuals and firms settling claims allowing wage earners to recover more than 244.17 million dirhams in unpaid leave and other compensations, as well as payment for unlawful dismissals.

Still no Strike Legislation

¶5. (U) In 2003, Morocco's social partners attempted to hash out with the GOM, new legislation regulating the rules on workers' rights to strike(ref C). After an initial year-long frenzy, with the proposed bill being passed to tripartite representatives for input, the bill faded into oblivion due to lack of willingness on the side of all three the social partners to compromise. It has languished on the shelf for nearly two years. (Note: According to some union representatives speaking unofficially, there is a chance that the bill may be resurrected at the time of the May Day labor celebrations.)

Comment

¶6. (SBU) Despite the increase in the actual number of strikes reported in Morocco in 2005, it appears the overall news is good on the labor front. The fact that the number of days lost to actions is down and participation of employees is up could indicate a greater awareness on employees' part of the overall effect of the actions. Morocco's Director of Labor, Abdelaziz Addoum, is optimistic about the future of Morocco's labor sector but admits there is still a long way to go. In recent meetings with Laboff, he voiced his satisfaction with the USDOL Social Dialogue project but at the same time made it clear that he would welcome any further assistance available from the USG in areas still struggling to comply with the new code. The areas most in need of improvement are health and safety, mediation and arbitration, labor statistics and gender issues.

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